

Claims

[cl001] 1. A tongue cleaner comprising:

a handle configured and adapted to be grasped by a human hand, the handle having a longitudinal axis,

a neck emanating from said handle,

a head region located distal to said neck,

a tongue brush located in said head region, said tongue brush including:

a bristle base configured to be a substantially rigid platform that will support tongue brush bristles in use, said bristle base having a proximal end adjacent said neck and a distal end, and

a plurality of bristles emanating from said bristle base, each of said bristles having a proximal end adjacent said bristle base and a distal end, at least some of said bristles being tapered from their proximal end to their distal end to present a pointed bristle appearance,

at least some of said bristles being of differing heights, said bristles being arranged generally in order of descending height from said bristle base distal end to said bristle base proximal end,

at least some of said bristles having a curvature that causes them to curve toward said neck,

said bristles being flexible to accommodate brushing of a human tongue without causing injury to the tongue,

said bristles and said bristle base being formed as a single unitary component from the same material via an injection molding process,

said bristles emanating from said bristle base in an individually-mounted and free-standing non-tufted configuration, and

a tongue scraper located in said head region, said tongue scraper including:

at least one tongue scraper blade, said tongue scraper blade having sufficient flexibility to be useful in removing undesirable material from a human tongue by a scraping action,

said tongue scraper blade emanating from said bristle base.

[cl002] 2. A device as recited in claim 1

wherein said bristle base has a top and a bottom;

wherein said bristles emanate from said bristle base top; and

wherein said tongue scraper blade emanates from said bristle base bottom.

[cl003] 3. A device as recited in claim 1

wherein said bristle base has a top and a bottom;

wherein said bristles emanate from said bristle base top; and

wherein said tongue scraper blade emanates from said bristle base top adjacent said bristles.

[cl004] 4. A device as recited in claim 1

wherein said bristles form a first colony at said bristle base distal end and a second colony at said bristle base proximal end; and

wherein said tongue scraper blade emanates from a location between said first and second bristle colony.

[cl005] 5. A device as recited in claim 1 wherein said handle, neck, bristle base, bristles and tongue scraper are formed as a single unitary component formed from a single material by an injection molding process.

[cl006] 6. A device as recited in claim 1

wherein said bristle base and bristles are formed from a first material by a first injection molding process, and the remainder of the tongue cleaner is formed from a second material by a second injection molding process; and

wherein said first material and said second material differ from each other.

[cl007] 7. A device as recited in claim 1

wherein said tongue brush is formed from a first material by a first injection molding process;

wherein said tongue scraper is formed from a second material by a second injection molding process;

a plurality of bristles emanating from said bristle base, each of said bristles having a proximal end adjacent said bristle base and a distal end, at least some of said bristles being tapered from their proximal end to their distal end to presented a pointed bristle appearance,

said bristles being flexible to accommodate brushing of a human tongue without causing injury to the tongue,

said bristles and said bristle base being formed as a single unitary component from the same material via an injection molding process, and

said bristles emanating from said bristle base in an individually-mounted and free-standing non-tufted configuration.

[cl013] 13. A device as recited in claim 12
wherein said bristles are arranged on said bristle base in a colony formation.

[cl014] 14. A device as recited in claim 12
wherein said bristles are arranged on said bristle base in a row formation.

[cl015] 15. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein said handle, neck, bristle base and bristles are formed as a single unitary component formed from a single material by an injection molding process.

[cl016] 16. A device as recited in claim 12
wherein said bristle base and bristles are formed from a first material by a first injection molding process, and the remainder of the tongue cleaner is formed from a second material by a second injection molding process; and
wherein said first material and said second material differ from each other.

[cl017] 17. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein at least a portion of the tongue cleaner includes a material selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, polystyrene, thermoplastic rubber, resin, silicon rubber, natural rubber and plastic.

[cl018] 18. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein said neck is oriented at an angle of less than 180 degrees with said handle longitudinal axis.

[cl019] 19. A device as recited in claim 12 further comprising finger grips located on said handle to enhance secure gripping of the handle by a user of the tongue cleaner.

[cl020] 20. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein at least some of said bristles are of a different length than other of said bristles.

[cl021] 21. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein said bristles terminate in a common plane.

[cl022] 22. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein at least some of said bristles are angled or curved with respect to said handle longitudinal axis.

[cl023] 23. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein at least some of said bristles are of a length greater than about 5 mm and less than about 10 mm.

[cl024] 24. A device as recited in claim 12 wherein at least some of said bristles have a base that is not more than about 1 mm in diameter.

[cl025] 25. A device as recited in claim 12 further comprising a tongue scraper blade in said head region, said tongue scraper blade having sufficient flexibility to be useful in removing undesirable material from a human tongue by a scraping action,

[cl026] 26. A device as recited in claim 12 further comprising a plurality of tongue scraper blades in said head region.

[cl027] 27. A device as recited in claim 26 wherein said tongue scraper blades include at least one primary tongue scraper blade and at least one secondary tongue scraper blade, said secondary tongue scraper blades serving to mechanically reinforce said primary tongue scraper blade.